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Letter from William McKinney to His Cousin Martha McKinney, circa 1862

William M. McKinney

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I hope you have been able to recruit your
Post Folio before this time, and have enough to
send me full sheets. It is entirely necessary, that
now, since letters are so long piping from post
to place and place to post, that they should be
very lengthy, at least two sheets, nothing less
will be considered as treated hereafter as a
letter. As to that 4th of July dinner, I expect if I live,
to eat it at your mansion. The inducements
offered by your Father are such, that I could not
refuse under any circumstances, be sure you value
enough of them, for by that time, I expect to be
able to make a hand at that business. Besides,
if that is to be the only dish (as I hear no other
spoken of) it will take quite a number to satis-
fy the demand. I will fully agree with an old
Spartan, I believe I have learned more during
this war, than ever I knew before, beside,
a man has to be a man, a boy will not do
for an officer, if a boy when he begins, it
will make a man of him, or he will
have to quit the service in ^{disgrace} and

You must not think from what I wrote you, that
I have forgotten that little dear at home or
near there. I was only filled with admira-
tion of the ones I saw in Ky, nothing more.
But I mean to settle after the war, and expect
for awhile, to live in Ohio. I expect to be
in Dayton for sometime, and will
call and see you now and then, does
the arrangement meet with your appro-
val? A fine excuse you have originated
about those tears shed at Uncle R L's. I
was not before aware that you were affected
with very weak eyes. But then, I suppose the
excuse will pass, since I know of no better
one that you could have offered. I do
not think you will be able to make much
off Aunt Angie, she is too old, and rather
too well posted on matters and things,
to let you get much the advantage. And
I'll let my head you cannot bribe her
in any way, I think she will be able
at least to keep even with her very ~~she~~
smart niece, don't get offended now at what
I have said, and set the chairs all to
riddling on the ceiling and the table on its back.

I think you are succeeding admirably in
keeping Will sick, so he cannot return to
Camp, you are feeding him too much,
and not permitting him to take exercise
enough. But really, he had better get a
discharge from the service, rather than return
again to his Company, and entirely ruin
his health, if not lose his life. He ought
not to worry himself about it, if he is not
able for the service, he ought not to be in
it, and should get out of it as soon as
possible, and surely a discharge is no
disgrace, when taken under such circum-
stances. That quotation, "bad of perfection,"
I think perfectly absurd, does not apply to
any gentleman and very few Ladies, should
not be used at all, I hope I may never see
it written or printed again anywhere,
it is only fit to be spoken and very seldom
under very peculiar circumstances. My Capt's
health is still as fine as ever, but he is yet at
barracks, do not know when he will rejoin us.
I did not get out on the scouting expedition, as
we moved away too soon. But I have already
written all the particulars of our movements up to the 11th

Will now give you a history of the last two days adven-
tures, observations, monuments, scenes, sights, opinions,
meditations, conditions, conclusions, considerations,
Ye, &c. &c. Yesterday morning at 8 A.M. I got permission
to visit the City of Nashville, procured a very fine horse,
got on my best equipments and started. Remem-
ber me were there encamped on the North side
the River and 7 miles from the City. The country
between our Camp and the City was or is the most
beautiful and the finest improved of any I ever
saw in my life. The residences are indeed
magnificent, and the surroundings most beautiful.
fine large parks of forest trees, and large yards
and long avenues filled with the finest shrub-
bery and evergreens, tastefully arranged. These are
the country residences of the wealthy business
men of the City. they are certainly perfect Paradises.
I crossed the River in a Steamer Ferry boat,
and lying near the crossing, is one of those
large steam boats, the one, it was
at the Battle of Ft Donelson. It is a very
formidable looking war engine I assure
you. The bridges the Rebels have destroyed
across the River, have been magnificent
structures. The Pike bridge, was a fine
Suspension one, and cost 150,000 dollars.
Felix K Zolceffer had 30,000 dollars stock
in it, his principal fortune, and would
have been the main support to his 4 orphan daughters.